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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, On December 9, 2013, the Chicago Bears football
3 club retired jersey number "89" in honor of Mike Ditka,
4 football player and coach; and

5 WHEREAS, After being drafted as a first-round tight end by
6 the Chicago Bears out of the University of Pittsburgh in 1961,
7 Mike Ditka continued to play in the same position for George
8 Halas' Bears through 1966; and

9 WHEREAS, With the Chicago Bears, Mike Ditka was recognized
10 as one of the great tight ends of all time, winning Rookie of
11 the Year honors in 1961, being named to the Pro Bowl 5 times in
12 a continuous streak from 1961 through 1965 (wearing the Bears'
13 navy blue and orange in all 5 years), and compiling a record
14 that would lead to his election to the Pro Football Hall of
15 Fame in 1988, the first player so honored for his career as a
16 tight end; and

17 WHEREAS, Mike Ditka's playing career included membership
18 on the 1963 Chicago Bears squad that captured the National
19 Football League championship; and

20 WHEREAS, Following their 1963 National Football League
21 championship, the Chicago Bears compiled a 20-year record of

1 mixed outcomes, with many all-time great Bears players such as
2 Dick Butkus, Walter Payton, and Gale Sayers caught in a
3 continuous pattern of rebuilding; and

4 WHEREAS, After the National Football League merged its
5 championship game with the rival American Football League to
6 create the Super Bowl, Mike Ditka continued his career with the
7 Dallas Cowboys, scoring on a touchdown pass tossed by Roger
8 Staubach in Super Bowl VI in January 1972; and

9 WHEREAS, Starting with the 1973 season, Mike Ditka
10 transitioned to coaching; in 1982, in one of owner George
11 Halas' final executive moves with the Chicago Bears
12 organization, he hired his former player, Mike Ditka, to be the
13 new head coach of the Chicago Bears; and

14 WHEREAS, New coach Mike Ditka, aided by an aggressive
15 coaching staff and front office, and with the support of owners
16 Virginia Halas McCaskey and her husband Ed, was determined to
17 change the pattern of ups and downs the Chicago Bears had been
18 experiencing for the past 2 decades; and

19 WHEREAS, Building around running back Walter Payton, Mike
20 Ditka's Chicago Bears returned to the playoffs in 1984; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1985, the 20th year of the National Football

1 League in the Super Bowl era, Mike Ditka's Chicago Bears, led
2 by quarterback Jim McMahon, Walter Payton, and other players
3 too numerous and immortal to list here, achieved a 15 and 1
4 record in the regular season; they marched through the playoffs
5 with opposing teams failing to score a single point in either
6 of the 2 games; the Bears qualified for the National Football
7 Conference's slot in Super Bowl XX, played in what was then the
8 Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans on January 26, 1986; and

9 WHEREAS, The Bears, led by "Da Coach" Mike Ditka, won Super
10 Bowl XX by a score of 46-10, at that time the largest winning
11 margin in Super Bowl history; and

12 WHEREAS, After retiring as a football coach at the end of
13 the 1999 season, Mike Ditka transitioned into broadcasting and
14 a business career; and

15 WHEREAS, The Chicago Bears retired Mike Ditka's number "89"
16 on December 9, 2013 in the presence of his Chicago Bears and
17 Dallas Cowboys; the Bears have announced it will be the final
18 jersey number to be retired by the team; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
20 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
21 we congratulate Michael Keller "Mike" Ditka for his
22 unforgettable service to the Chicago Bears, the City of

1 Chicago, and the State of Illinois as football player and
2 coach; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That we congratulate the Chicago Bears football
4 organization for its decision to allocate its 14th and final
5 jersey number retirement to Mike Ditka; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That we wish many future years of success, in and
7 out of the football world, to Mike Ditka and his family; and be
8 it further

9 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
10 presented to Mike Ditka and to the Chicago Bears football
11 organization.